

Dryden's Virgil

compared

with the Latin original.

Inaugural-Dissertation

presented

to the Philosophical Faculty

of the University of Rostock

by

Dr. John Diekmann.

ROSTOCK.

CHARLES BOLDT'S PRINTING-OFFICE.

1874.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

Dryden's translation of Virgil may undoubtedly be called the most important of all his works. „When I undertook this work, he says in his Postscript, I acquitted myself, in some measure, of the debts which I owed the public“. When I, therefore, undertake to compare it with the original, when I undertake to examine, how far one of the most eminent English poets succeeded in Englishing the admired works of one of the most celebrated Latin poets, I may hope that my labour will be both interesting and useful. It must, however, be admitted, my task is no easy one; in order to be able to form a judgment of the translation, it will be unavoidably necessary to know the original; it will be indispensably requisite to examine the circumstances of the author as well as of the translator; it will be necessary to examine both the means of either of them, to forward and to accomplish their undertakings, and the difficulties either of them had to struggle with. It can, however, not be my task to examine all that has been said in favour of or against Virgil's poetry; it will be enough to point out the most essential moments that will enable us to form a judgment of the worth of his works.

There are few authors whose writings obtained the acknowledgment and admiration of the world with such unanimous consent as Virgil's poetry, and I dare say, there is none who enjoyed the fruit of his labour with such untroubled fame as the author of the Aeneid. He was scarcely thirty years old, when the publication of his

Pastorals brought him into such favour in Rome that according to Tacitus all the spectators in the theatre rose to their feet, when some of his verses were being recited in his presence. His fame introduced him into the best society of Rome. Donatus tells us, that Augustus himself, after the battle of Actium, spent four days hearing Virgil reading his *Georgics*. And those admirers must be supposed to have been excellent judges of the worth of poetical works; Virgil lived in an age that had abundance of great poets whose names are as immortal as his own.

Our poet's first work were his *Pastorals*, an imitation of *Theocritus*. He had been brought up in the country; the beauties of the country, its mountains, vales, streams, woods, fields and herds affected and charmed him in so high a degree, that even afterwards, when he had become the favourite of the mighty emperor, and the friend of Pollio, Horace, Varius and other great men, who preferred to live in the busy metropolis, he retired to his charming country-seat. What wonder, that he, the friend of nature and the favourite of the muses, succeeded so well in that poetry which is, in some measure, a counterfeiting of nature and bears the name of shepherd-poem?

Maecenas is said to have induced Virgil to compose his *Georgics*, that wonderful poem which by the critics has been called a master-piece of didactic poetry and one of the happiest productions of antiquity. The author of the *Pastorals* might, indeed, be expected to unfold his admirable art of nature-painting in a higher degree; but he who was to give instruction about tillage, planting trees, breeding cattle, and keeping bees ought to know himself how to till, how to plant trees, how to breed cattle, how to keep bees, and it can scarcely be denied that our poet's knowledge is somewhat deficient, at least in the fourth *Georgic*.

Virgil's last work was his *Aeneid*. He was expected to compose a national epos, representing the first beginnings of ancient Rome and the descent of the gens Julia from Aeneas. Having almost no traditions, he was obliged to take the greatest deal of his work from his fantasy. But taking abundantly from that rich source and representing his hero and his companions, not in the habits and manners of the heroic age, but in the polite life and style of the Roman and Greek world of his own days, we miss in his lines that vigorous mind, that poetical power, and dramatic talent we admire so much in Homer's poetry. Virgil himself was not satisfied with his *Aeneid*; we know that during his illness he desired the *Aeneid* might be destroyed, but to this Augustus would not consent; he therefore gave it in charge to Tucca and Varius, with injunctions that no alterations whatever should be made upon it.

These are the works of the Mantuan poet, not many, nor voluminous, but richly adorned with all those qualities that make of a poem an inestimable treasure, transmitted from generation to generation, delighting and instructing, never losing its worth. They are replete with richness of sentiment, elegance of expression and a happy intermixture of useful and entertaining precepts and descriptions, where we receive more strong and lively ideas of things from his words than we would have done from the objects themselves, and find our imagination more affected by his descriptions than they would have been by the very sight of what he describes. We meet in them an exquisite taste for what is natural, an exquisite judgment for the contrivance, and an incomparable delicacy in regard to the numbers and harmony of versification.

Such was the man, and such the works Dryden undertook to translate into his mother-tongue. It may be that the encouragements of his friends and the unhappy

turn of his circumstances induced him principally to undertake a work, worthy of such a genius; but Dryden himself was an admirer of the author of the *Georgics*; his admiration of Virgil was so great that there are few pages in his prose-writings which do not contain some reference to him. In his Dedication to the *Aeneid* he says: „Long before I undertook this work I was no stranger to the original, I had also studied Virgil's design, his disposition of it, his manners, his judicious management of the figures, the sober retrenchments of his sense, which always leave somewhat to gratify our imagination, on which it may enlarge at pleasure, but above all the elegance of his expression and the harmony of his numbers; for as I have said in a former dissertation, the words are in poetry what the colours are in painting: if the design be good and the draught true, the colouring is the first beauty that strikes the eye“.

We may therefore suppose that Dryden perfectly knew the great merits of his author, the great beauties of his works, and that it would be no easy task to render them in his version; that he perfectly knew all the difficulties he would have to struggle with. And these difficulties were enormous; hundreds and thousands of translations have been undertaken, before and after Dryden — where is there a civilized nation, an assiduous people that has not endeavoured to make the great models of antiquity their own by rendering them in their own languages — and how restrained is the number of those translations which have not been forgotten, but the merits of which have made of them national properties as immortal as the originals. He who is to translate any work, how can he succeed without being master of his own language as well as of that from which he is going to translate; how can he succeed without knowing

the object of his original as well as his author himself; and even then his translation will be inferior to the original, if the language of the former is less appropriate than that of the latter. These, however, are qualities the translator of any prose-writing must be possessed of; how much greater are the difficulties for him who is translating a poetical work; while the former is only endeavouring to render the meaning and genius of his original, the latter has to struggle with an other difficulty; it is not enough for him to know and understand his author, but he himself must be inspired of that „sacred flame,“ of that divine spirit that alone can enable him to give his translation that elegance and harmony which constitute the worth of a poem; to be short, he himself must be a poet.

The latter difficulty, however, is not always the same. A precious stone may be enchased in an artless common case, a vile piece of glass put into a precious frame, and you may take the stone out of its case, the glass out of its frame without lessening the worth of either of them; but a precious stone enchased in an artful precious frame constitute a jewel that excites our admiration; both are connected in such a manner that separating them would be destroy its price and beauty. It is the same in poetry; the most poetical ideas may be expressed in common artless lines, the most common ideas in beautiful numbers; but it is not that we expect of a poet, but he is expected to give us his poetical ideas in elegant and harmonious numbers. In the first case the translator will have most easy work, in the second his task will be most difficult, but his merit if he succeeded, would be of no importance; he would only prove him to be skilful in the art of rhyming; in the third case the translator's merit, though his difficulty be less, will be the greatest, he acquits himself, as Dryden says, of the debts he owes the public.

The choice of the verse, therefore, must be of the greatest importance for him who undertakes to translate Virgil, who excels no less by the harmony of his numbers than by the management of his figures and the elegance of his expression. Our Schiller, having been invited by his friends to translate Virgil, tells us that what embarrassed him most, was the choice of an appropriate metre. Thinking the German hexametre too rugged a verse to render the smoothness, harmony, and variety of the original, he chose the „ottava rima,“ hoping that it would most enable him to approach to the beauty of his author, Bürger, being of the same opinion, began his translation of Homer in rhymed decasyllabics and endeavoured to prove the superiority of this metre to the hexametre. Voss, notwithstanding, preferred the classic hexametre and mastered his verse in such a manner, that Bürger changing his opinion, undertook the translation of the *Ilias* in the same metre.

Dryden himself has scarcely ever hesitated in the choice of his metre. His author's metre was not at all appropriate; a short examination of Longfellow's *Evangeline* will prove it. The heroic couplet, or rhymed decasyllabic was, therefore, the only metre left to him. We know that he liked this metre very much, and valued himself for his readiness in finding the rhyme. It is, however, true, he might have chosen his great predecessor's verse, Milton's blank verse, as afterwards Brady and Trapp did, but it is known, that Dryden had the somewhat curious intention to transform Milton's *Paradise Lost* in rhymed verse. It was only a few years before his death, he changed his opinion and began preferring rhymeless verse. It is one of Dryden's principal merits to have given elegance and harmony to English poetry, and the new versification, as it was called,

may be considered as owing its establishment to Dryden, from whose time it is apparent that English poetry had no tendency to relapse to its former savageness. After about half a century of forced thoughts and rugged metre some advance towards nature and harmony had been already made by Waller and Denham; they had shown that long discourses in rhyme grow more pleasing when they were broken into couplets, and that verse consisted not only in the number but in the arrangement of syllables.

When our translator undertook his most difficult labour, many attempts had been already made to render the celebrated classics in English, but though his predecessors did much, they left much to do; while some servilely copied the very words of their originals, others assumed a license equally faulty, and claimed the privilege of writing what might be more properly termed imitations than versions of the classics. Ben Jonson thought it necessary to copy Horace almost word by word, Feldham considered it as indispensably requisite in a translation to give line for line, Sandys struggled to give every book in the same number of verses with the original, Holyday had nothing in view but to show that he understood his author. Denham appears to have been one of the first that understood the necessity of emancipating translation from the drudgery of counting lines and interpreting single words — a practice that obscured the clearest and deformed the most beautiful parts of the ancient authors; and men well qualified, not only by critical knowledge, but by poetical genius, degraded at once their originals and themselves by a mistaken ambition of exactness. Denham saw the better way, but did not pursue it with great success. It was reserved to Dryden manfully to claim and to vindicate the freedom of a just translation, more limited than paraphrase but free from metaphrastic

severity. Not to copy servilely the very words, but to transfuse the spirit of the author, he said, is the object of the translator. When the languages are formed upon different principles, it is impossible, that the same modes of expression should always be elegant in both; while they run on together, the closest expression may be considered as the best, but when they divaricate, each must take its natural course.

Virgil's principal beauties are grace and splendour of diction, and it must be admitted, those are difficult to be retained in a translation; the blossoms of elocution easily drop away. The author, having the choice of his own images, selects those, which he can best adorn, the translator must at all hazards follow his original and express thoughts which perhaps he would not have chosen. When to this primary difficulty is added the inconvenience of a language so much inferior in harmony to the Latin, it cannot be expected that they who read the *Georgics* and *Aeneid* should be much delighted with any version.

When Dryden began the most laborious of all his works, he was more than sixty years old, and his long eventful life had not been without suffering and misfortune. „What, says he in his Postscript to the *Aeneid*, what Virgil wrote in the vigour of his age, in plenty and ease, I have undertaken to translate in my declining years; struggling with wants, oppressed with sickness, curbed in my genius, liable to be misconstrued in all I write“. And in the Dedication to the *Pastorals*: „What I now offer to your Lordship is the wretched remainder of a sickly age, worn out with study and oppressed by fortune without other support than the constancy and patience of a christian“.

His circumstances, however, must not have been so desperate as might be concluded from his complaints.

When he retired from the stage and bent his thoughts upon one great literary task, the translation of Virgil, the English nation seemed to consider its honour interested in the event. The names of Dryden and Virgil were talismans powerful to arrest all the literature of England and fix universal attention upon the progress of the work. The increase of good taste, the improvement of education, all contributed to the encouragement of Dryden's great undertaking, which promised to present the admired Latin poet in a becoming form to a public, now prepared to receive him with merited admiration.

Indeed, if anybody, Dryden had all the qualities requisite for a translator of Virgil; he had been brought up in the country like his author; like him, he never ceased inmidst of the busy life of the metropolis to be a friend of nature and an admirer of its beauties; it was in the country he made his best versions, the first Georgic and the last Aeneid. „No wonder, he says, if those translations surpass the rest“. Then he possessed a competent knowledge of his original. Having distinguished himself at Westminster under the tuition of Busby who advanced his scholars to a height of knowledge very rarely attained in grammar-schools, he afterwards resided at Cambridge, so that it is not to be supposed that his skill in the ancient languages was deficient, although his scholastic acquisitions seem not to have been proportionate to his opportunities and abilities. It is true, Dryden is said to have translated the first book of Tacitus from the French, but it can scarcely be believed that he wanted the literature necessary to the perusal of Tacitus. Besides the knowledge of the language of his original, Dryden brought to the task of translation an unbounded command of his own language. And with these qualities he combined that power which constitutes a poet, that quality without which

judgment is cold and knowledge is inert, that energy which collects, combines, amplifies and animates, that which is called superiority of genius.

Such was the man, and such his abilities, who undertook the most laborious and difficult task to translate the greatest epic poet of ancient Rome, and we comprehend the eagerness with which the publication of this work was expected. Long before Dryden began his translation of Virgil, he had, in a preface to the Epistles of Horace, translated by some poets of the time, expressed his opinion and struggled for the liberty of translation, and it would be difficult to conjecture, why it should find any difficulty in breaking the shackles of verbal interpretation which must debar it for ever from elegance, were not the power of prejudice every day observed. The authority of Jonson, Sandys, and Holyday had fixed the judgment of the nation, and it was not easily believed, that a better way could be found than they had taken. Translation, said Dryden, is not so loose as paraphrase, nor so close as metaphrase; the translator is to exhibit his author's thoughts in such a dress of diction as the author would have given them, had his language been English; rugged magnificence is not to be softened, hyperbolical ostentation is not to be repressed nor sententious affectation to have its point blunted. A translator is to be like his author, it is not his business to excel him.

Indeed, those principles may be called excellent, and there can scarcely any objection be made to them; but how far did Dryden succeed in observing them in his version. There is the rub. Dryden himself seems to have been well satisfied with his work: „I thankfully acknowledge to the almighty power, he says in his Postscript, the assistance, he has given me in the beginning, the prosecution and conclusion of my present studies — his version of Virgil —

which are more happily performed than I could have promised to myself, when I laboured under such discouragements“. Let us see, if we can consent with him. It would, however, be endless and needless too to extend the comparison to the whole version; it will be sufficient to compare some part considerable enough to form a judgment of the whole. To this purpose it will be best to examine some part of the beginning, some of the persecution, some of the conclusion; therefore I have chosen the fourth Pastoral, the tenth Pastoral, the fourth Georgic, and the tenth Aeneid.

Pastoral IV.

Pollio.

1. „Sicilian muse, begin a loftier strain!

Though lowly shrubs, and trees that shade the plain,
Delight not all, Sicilian muse, prepare

To make the vocal woods deserve a consul's care“.

„Though“; it is not „though,“ but even because Pastorals do not delight every body, that Virgil invokes the assistance of the muse.

„Sicelides Musae, paulo majora canamus!

Non omnes arbusta juvant humilesque myricae;

Si canimus silvas, silvae sint consule dignae“.

The second „Sicilian muse“ is needless and rather tedious — „Vocal woods“ is somewhat obscure; a wood may be „vocal“ and „deserve a consul's care“ without being the object of a song.

5. „The last great age, foretold by sacred rhymes,
Renews its finished course. Saturnian times
Roll round again, and mighty years, begun
From their first orb, in radiant circles run“.

„Sacred rhymes“ is not exact; Virgil's „Cumaean carmen“ may perhaps be called „sacred rhymes,“ but „sacred rhymes are by no means a Cumaean carmen“. — „Mighty years, running in radiant circles“ and „base degenerate iron offspring“ are bursts of extravagance of the translator, who forgets entirely that most essential, „jam redit et Virgo“.

„Ultima Cumaei venit jam carminis aetas;
Magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo.
Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna“.

13. „The lovely boy, with his auspicious face“.

To what purpose that „lovely boy, with his auspicious face“ who, according to Dryden, was, one minute ago, in his mother's womb? Virgil's „decus hoc aevi“ does not allude to that boy, it means the happy age which is to begin under his -Pollio's- consulship.

„Teque adeo decus hoc aevi, te consule, inibit“.

20. „The jarring nations he in peace shall bind“.

According to Virgil there are no longer jarring nations, when he begins his career; they are already „bound in peace“ by his father, he is only to rule them.

„Pacatumque reget patriis virtutibus orbem“.

22. „Unbidden earth shall wreathing ivy bring
And fragrant herbs (the promises of spring)
As her first offerings to the infant king“.

„Unbidden“ may be called a happy expression for „nullo cultu,“ but the two following lines do not at all approach to the original.

„At tibi prima, puer, nullo munuscula cultu,
Errantes hederas passim cum baccare tellus
Mixtoque ridenti colocassia fundet acantho“.

„Fragrant herbs“ is an imperfect translation of Virgil's beautiful verse — „the promises of spring“ is needless. — That somewhat curious „infant king“ is to no purpose.

28. „The serpent's brood shall die, the sacred ground
Shall weeds and poisonous plants refuse to bear;
Each common bush shall Syrian roses wear“.

These lines, it must be admitted, are happily rendered;

„Occidet et serpens et fallax herba veneni
Occidet, Assyrium volgo nascetur amomum“.

It would, however, be a somewhat monotonous paradise, where „every common bush wears Syrian roses“; that is not the meaning of Virgil's „volgo nascetur amomum“.

34. „And clustered grapes shall blush an every thorn,
The knotted oaks shall showers of honey weep,
And through the matted grass the liquid gold shall
creep“.

„Clustered grapes, blushing an every thorn,“ knotted oaks, weeping showers of honey“ and „liquid gold, creeping through the matted grass“ are exaggerations and somewhat fantastical things, invented by our translator, and not by his author:

„Incultisque rubens pendebit sentibus uva,
Et durae quercus sudabunt roseida mella“.

52. „But the luxurious father of the fold,
With native purple and unborrowed gold,
Beneath his pompous fleece shall proudly sweat“.

„The luxurious father of the fold shall proudly sweat!“

The original does not give Dryden the least occasion for this licentious digression.

„Ipse sed in pratis aries jam suave rubenti
Murice, jam croceo mutabit vellera luto“.

It may, however, in some measure, be excused by the licence of his time; we know how severely Dryden was blamed for his licentious plays.

56. „The Fates, when they this happy web have spun,
Shall bless the sacred clue and bid it smoothly run“.

The Fates do not spin a web, and Dryden may be supposed not to have understood his original; at least his translation is deficient.

„Talia saecla suis dixerunt, currite, fuis

Concordes stabili fatorum numine Parcae“.

It is an impardonable negligence to pass over in silence the whole second line, that is important enough.

59. „O celestial seed! o foster-son of Jove“

is compared with the original:

„Cara deum suboles, magnum Jovis incrementum“

a very weak verse.

60. „See, labouring nature calls thee to sustain

The nodding frame of heaven, and earth, and main.

See to their base restored, earth, seas, and air;

And joyful ages, from behind, in crowding ranks

appear“.

The meaning of these lines is: The whole nature — heaven, earth and main — are suffering and want your assistance; restored by you, a happy age will follow; but that is not the meaning of the original:

„Aspice convexo nutantem pondere mundum,

Terrasque tractusque maris coelumque profundum;

Aspice, venturo laetantur ut omnia saeclo“.

Here is no „labouring nature,“ which is to be sustained, on the contrary, the whole nature, heaven, earth, and main are nodding with joy; look how all is joyful on account of the coming happy age, here are no „earth, seas, and air — a somewhat curious combination-restored to their base,“ nor „joyful ages appearing from behind, in crowding ranks“; the former verse is a needless repetition, the latter a burst of extravagance; both are not in the original.

75. The nauseous qualms of ten long months and travail
to requite.

It is a meanness that the Sicilian muse who begins in a „loftier strain“ ends her song with such „nauseous qualms“; they are Dryden's and not his author's property.

„Matri longa decem tulerunt fastidia menses“.

Dryden himself seems to have considered his translation of the fourth Pastoral as one of his best versions. „In the three first Eclogues, he says in his Dedication, Virgil contains himself within his bounds, but addressing to Pollio, his great patron, and himself no vulgar poet, he no longer could restrain the freedom of his spirit, but began to assert his native character, which is sublimity“. And in the same Dedication: „In those Eclogues wherein my master has raised himself above that humble style in which Pastoral delights and which, I must confess, is proper to the education and converse of shepherds, my faults are neither gross nor frequent“.

It is true, the merits of great works are to be estimated not by comparing line with line, but by their general effect and ultimate result; but there is no doubt, he who has attentively read both the original and the translation must allow that the general effect of the latter does not by far approach to that of the former, even without regard to the numerous faults of negligence, exaggeration, extravagance and license which have been, in some measure, pointed out in the preceding pages. It must, however, be admitted, there are splendid images in it which do not only approach to but even surpass the original, but there is not at all that correct, steady even flight which distinguishes Virgil's poetry.

Though Dryden's verses are generally just and sonorous, his negligence is often to be blamed in the versification too. Of the 77 verses of the fourth Pastoral there are no less than eleven Alexandrines; v. 12, 15, 19, 36,

42, 50, 64, 69, 73, 75, 77; three triplets; v. 13, 14, 15, — 22, 23, 24—49, 50, 51, and six imperfect rhymes; v. 20, 21—49, 50—55, 56—59, 60—63, 64—71, 72. —

Pastoral X.

Gallus.

1. „Thy sacred succour, Arethusa, bring,
To crown my labour ('t is the last I sing)
Which proud Lycoris may with pity view:
The muse is mournful, though the numbers few,
Refuse me not a verse, to grief and Gallus due“.

„'T is the last I sing“ is a needless addition — „The muse is mournful“ — why? an account of the numbers? There is no „mournful muse“ in the original, and she might rather be supposed gay.

„Extremum hunc, Arethusa, mihi concede laborem.
Pauca meo Gallo, sed quae legat ipsa Lycoris,
Carmina sunt dicenda; negat quis carmina Gallo“.

10. „The vocal grove shall answer to the sound,
And echo, from the vales, the tuneful voice rebound“.
Two beautiful lines, indeed, but how far from attaining that charming simplicity of the original:

„Non canimus surdis, respondent omnia silvae“.

There are no „vocal groves,“ no „sound,“ no „echo,“ no „vale,“ no „tuneful voice,“ and yet it is infinitely better to the purpose.

11. „What lawns or woods withheld you from his aid,
Ye nymphs, when Gallus was to love betrayed,
To love, unpitied by the cruel maid“.

„From his aid“ Were the nymphs to help him? „Gallus was to love betrayed“? by whom? by that cruel maid that had no pity? scarcely. Altogether, the meaning of the original is deficiently expressed.

„Quae nemora, aut qui vos saltus habuere, puellae
Naides, indigno cum Gallus peribat amore“?

That „indignus amor“ and „peribat“ are not, or very imperfectly rendered.

17. „Nothing that owns the muses, could suspend
Your aid to Gallus; Gallus is their friend“.

This somewhat philosophical argumentation, even supposed it to be right, might better have been passed over in silence, since it is not mentioned at all in the original.

21. „Maenalian pines the god-like swain bemoan,
When spread beneath a rock, he sighed alone,
And cold Lycaeus wept from every dropping stone“.

A „god-like swain“ is rather a being that is not to be bemoaned — he did not „sigh alone,“ but beneath a solitary rock, „sola sub rupe“ — „Lycaeus wept from every dropping stone“; a stone may drop, or poetically weep; but a stone does not drop and weep together.

„Pinifer illum etiam sola sub rupe jacentem
Maenalus et gelidi fleverunt saxa Lycae“.

25. „The sheep surround their shepherd as he lies:
Blush not, sweet poet, nor the name despise“.

These two lines do by no means render Virgil's:

„Stant et oves circum; nostri nec poenitet illas,
Nec te poeniteat pecoris, divine poeta“.

„Nostri nec poenitet illas“ is not mentioned at all in the translation, though it is most essential in the Latin poet's idea“.

27. „And yet the queen of beauty blest his bed“
is a fine verse, but „hic non erat locus“. The original does not speak of Adonis' love.

30. „Wondering, they asked from whence arose thy flame,
Yet more amazed, thy own Apollo came;
Flushed were his cheeks, and glowing were his eyes;
Is she thy care? is she thy care? (he cries)“.

Four long decasyllabics to render one verse and a half of the original:

„Omnes, unde amor iste, rogant, tibi? Venit Apollo,
Galle, quid insanis? inquit“.

And, it must be admitted, the latter is better to the purpose. There is no „wondering“ — „omnes“ is not translated — no „amazed“ nor „his own Apollo“ — why his own? — „with flushed cheeks and glowing eyes“ — rather the picture of a drunkard — „Is she thy care“? is most innocent and does not render „quid insanis“? The second „Is she thy care“ is a mere stop-gap, the whole passage rather weak.

36. „The forms of horrid war and heaven's inclemency“ —
„Forms of horrid war“ is an inexact translation of Virgil's:

„perque horrida castra secuta est“.

43. „The meads are sooner drunk with morning dews,
The bees with flowery shrubs, the goats with browse“.
„Meads drunk with dews, and bees and goats drunk with shrubs and browse“ are fantastic things of Dryden's extravagant mind; his author did not like such general drunkenness:

„Nec gramina rivis,

Nec citiso saturantur apes, nec fronde capellae“.

Dryden's „morning dews“ are by no means what Virgil's „rivi“.

45. „Unmoved and with dejected eyes he mourned;
He paused and then these words returned:
'Tis past, and pity gives me no relief“.

These three lines together are three words in the original:

„Tristis at ille“.

Is not such an „unmoved,“ „mourning“ fellow „with dejected eyes,“ „pausing“ and then „returning: 'Tis past!“

a rare being, that Virgil would never have been able to create? „'T is past! and pity gives me no relief“ is an exaggeration of Dryden's; Virgil does not show us his Gallus in so desperate a situation.

49. „And on your hills my last complaints renew:

So sad a song is only worthy you“.

That is not the exact meaning of the original:

„Tamen cantabitis, Arcades, inquit,

Montibus heac vestris; soli cantare periti Arcades“.

Not „on“ but „to“ your hills. In his first Eclogue Virgil says:

„Ipsae te, Tityre, pinus,

Ipsi te fontes, ipsa heac arbusta vocabant“.

„So sad a song is only worthy you“; this by no means flowing verse is far from rendering Virgil's: „soli cantare periti“.

58. „Are violets not sweet, because not fair“?

A strange question. A flower may be sweet, though not fair; but a flower that is not fair, is not always sweet; it is the former thought the translator intends to express.

„Et nigrae violae, et vacinia nigra“.

59. „Beneath the willows and the shady vine,

My loves had mixed their pliant limbs with mine“.

is a negligent — if not erroneous — and licentious version of the original:

„Mecum inter salices lenta sub vite jaceret“.

Here are no „mixed pliant limbs,“ but our translator forgets entirely „sub“ and translates, as if Virgil had written: inter salices et lentam vitem, „sub vite“ is crowned with vine; to be sure, Dryden was not right to render „inter“ and „sub“ by the same preposition „beneath“.

63. „Come and see, what pleasures in our plains abound“.

Whom does he invite to come? It is not to be seen in the translation, but the original tells us, who is to come:

„Hic gelidi fontes, hic mollia prata „Lycori“.

Is it not a negligence of the translator to omit this name?

65. „As you are beautiful, were you half so true,
Here could I live, and love and die with only you“.

A splendid verse, indeed, but why that „only“? Virgil does not compare Lycoris' beauty with her fidelity; nowhere he mentions her infidelity, he only says:

„Hic ipso tecum consumerer aevo“.

74. „For me the wilds and deserts are my choice;
The muses, once my care, my once harmonious voice“.

It is difficult to see in this translation the original:

„Ibo et Chalcidico quae sunt mihi condita versu
Carmina, pastoris Siculi modulabor avena“.

To what purpose those „wilds and deserts“? is he who intends to compose Pastorals to choose „wilds and deserts“? „The muses, once my care, my once harmonious voice“; had the muses ever ceased to be his care, or his voice, to be harmonious? To be sure, that „pastor modulans avena carmina condita Chalcidico versu“ is not in the translation.

80. „Then on Arcadian mountains will I chase
(Mixed with the woodland nymphs) the savage race“.

What „savage race“ is he going to „chase“? wild men or beasts? The original is inexactly rendered:

„Interea mixtis lustrabo Maenala nymphis,
Aut acres venabor apros“.

86. „As if with sports my sufferings I could ease,
Or by my pains the god of love appease,
My frenzy changes“.

Two happy lines, which, however, do not render the high beauty of the original:

„Tanquam heac sit nostri medicina furoris,
Aut deus ille malis hominum mitescere discat“.

„My frenzy changes“ is a needless and rather unhappy addition.

98. „In hell, and earth, and seas, and heaven above
Love conquers all; and we must yield to Love“.

„Hell, earth, seas and heaven“ is a somewhat wild and fantastical combination. When Virgil composed his beautiful description of the irresistible power of Love, it was certainly not his intention to extend it to „hell and seas“. He only says:

„Omnia vincit Amor, et nos cedamus Amori“
and that is enough.

What has been said upon the version of the fourth Pastoral, may be said on that of the tenth too; here and there almost the same faults; the same negligence, the same coarseness, the same license. It can, however, not be denied, our translator is working more steadily; we do not meet with so many bursts of extravagance, and therefore the general effect is more favourable. There are beautiful passages, splendid images and elegant descriptions, that, if they do not equal, at least approach to the superiority of the original. In the versification our translator is more diligent and careful; there are not so many irregularities in verse and rhyme, interrupting the constancy of the metre and molesting the reader's ear.

The fourth Georgic.

1. „The gifts of heaven my following song pursues,
Aerial honey, and ambrosial dews“.

Are „aerial honey“ and „ambrosial dews“ two different gifts of heaven? or is the latter only a circumlocution of the former?

Whatever it may be, the original is better:

„Aerii mellis caelestia dona“.

4. „Embattled squadrons and adventurous kings —
A mighty pomp“ —

is a burst of extravagance of Dryden's; there are no such things in the original, more appropriate for a description of a bloody contest between mighty chiefs of great empires than for a translation of Virgil's:

„Admiranda tibi levium spectacula rerum“.

9. „If heaven assist“ —

is not the meaning of the original:

„Si numina laeva sinunt“ —

16. „And the birds of prey,
Foes of the frugal kind“ —

The „titmouse, pecker and swallow“ may scarcely be called „birds of prey“ — frugal kind? what frugal kind? the bees?

Virgil does not mention „birds of prey“ nor „foes of the frugal kind,“ he says: „Absint — meropes aliaeque volucres“.

20. „These rob the trading citizens and bear
The trembling captives through the liquid air,
And for their callow young a cruel feast prepare“.

These three lines render Virgil's following lines only imperfectly.

„Omnia nam late vastant, ipsasque volantes
Ore ferunt dulcem nidis inmitibus escam“.

The „trading citizens“ lead the reader rather from the country and the bee-house to the town — „bear them through the liquid air“ does not render Virgil's „ipsas volantes“; they are caught flying in the air — „cruel feast“ — why cruel? for the „callow young“ — why not feathered? — it is rather a joyous feast — „dulcis esca“. — How much better that, indeed, Virgilian „dulcem nidis inmitibus escam“ -- „Omnia late vastant“ is essential and ought not to have been dropped by the translator.

25. „The winds impetuous rage to stop“ —

To what purpose trees and bushes are to be planted near the bee-house, we should know better, even if Virgil had not informed us, saying:

„Palmaque vestibulum aut ingens oleaster inumbret“.

31. „The banks of brooks may make a cool retreat
For the raw soldiers from the scalding heat.
And neighbouring trees, with friendly shade invite
The troops, unused to long laborious flight“.

Our translator once more shows us a battlefield; he shows us a „retreat“ for „raw soldiers,“ „troops“ etc. things the original does not mention at all:

„Vicina invitet decedere ripa calori,
Obviaque hospitiis teneat frondentibus arbos“.

35. „Then o'er the running stream, or standing lake,
A passage for thy weary people make“.

„A passage“? Those bridges the latin poet does speak of are intended to be a saving plank and a resting place for his tired and almost drowned bees.

„Pontibus ut crebris possint consistere et alas
Pandere ad aestivum solem“.

43. „Wild thyme and savory set around their cell“.

„Their cell“ might be misunderstood.

„Heac circum casiae virides“ etc. says the original,

and „heac“ are those things the poet has spoken of, „fontes et stagna“.

77. „Exalted hence, and drunk with secret joy,
 Their young succession all their cares employ;
 They breed, they brood, instruct and educate,
 And make provision for the future state;
 They work their waxen lodgings in the hives,
 And labour honey to sustain their lives“.

These lines are beautiful, splendid and elegant, it must be admitted. Dryden gives us an excellent description of the busy life of his bees in spring, much more circumstantial than that of Virgil:

„Hinc nescio qua dulcedine laetae
 Progeniem nidosque foveant, hinc arte recentes
 Excudunt ceras et mella tenacia fingunt“.

No doubt, in this passage Dryden might be called superior to his author, if not his exaggerations lessened the worth of his lines. To what purpose, for instance, that burst of extravagance, „exalted and drunk with joy“ — „drunk“ seems to be a favourite term of Dryden's; his meads are drunk with dew, his bees with shrubs, his goats with browse — cf. Pastoral X. 44. — And then to „breed, brood, instruct, and educate“ — The instruction and education of bees is a somewhat fantastical invention of the translator, unknown to his author, — „for the future state“ is inexact; the future state — undoubtedly the swarm — leaves the native hive without any dowry.

90. „Straight to their ancient cells, recalled from air,
 The reconciled deserters will repair“.

Our translator must be supposed not to have been a bee-master, at least he did not know much of bee-keeping, otherwise he could not have misunderstood his original in such a manner. A swarm, having left its native hive,

is sometime flying in the air, then descending it generally sits down in the shade of a hedge, bush or tree, forming a grape-like cluster and is put into a hive by the bee-master.

That is what the original says:

„Ipsae consident medicatis sedibus, ipsae
Intima more suo sese in cunabula condent“.

The „medicatae sedes“ are by no means the „ancient cells,“ but the shady trees and bushes the poet has spoken of, and the „intima cunabula“ Dryden does not mention at all is that grape-like cluster. In the Latin poet's lines there are no „reconciled deserters,“ there are no „ancient cells,“ but there is a joyous marriage, as it is called; the young people leave their native house with the full consent of their parents and are going to found a new colony.

92. The following forty verses — 92 — 132 — contain a splendid description of a bloody war, but they can scarcely be called a translation of Virgil's twenty lines. — In his poetical strain, the English poet gives us an abundance of high sounding words of partly beautiful images, but it is difficult to find in his lines the Latin original, and more than once, we are tempted to believe, we are in a field, where two powerful princes with hundred thousands of soldiers are fighting for their honour and their country. There are in his lively description „murmering sounds“ that proclaim the „civil war,“ factions that „inflamed with ire“ and „trembling with disdain“ „scarce can their limbs, their mighty souls contain“; „soldiers repairing to their standard“; „nimble horsemen, scouring the fields of air“; „knights, proud to prove their worth, and fighting for their contry's honour and their king's“; „haughty monarchs, riding in the midst“; „shocking squadrons that meet in mortal fight“; „princes that challenge and encounter breast to breast, fired on fame, unknowing how to fly“.

However beautiful all this may be, *hic non erat locus*; there are no such things in the original; Virgil was too sober-minded a poet to put down such abnormities.

133. „When both the chiefs are sundred from the fight“ —
That is not the meaning of Virgil's:

„Ubi ductores acie revocaveris ambo“ —

but, when both without having settled the quarrel by the death of either of them, are returned to the hive.

138. „One monarch wears an honest open face“.

The bee-keeper must be an experienced physiognomist to distinguish the worth of his bee by its „honest open face“. Is that the meaning of the original:

„Insignis ore“.

143. „That other looks like nature in disgrace“,

„Gaunt are his sides, and sullen is his face“

is an imperfect and even incorrect translation of Virgil's:

„Ille horridus alter

Desidia latamque trahens inglorius alvum“.

149. „The better brood, unlike the bastard crew,
Are marked with royal streaks of shining hue;
Glittering and ardent, though in body less“.

„In body less“ is an incorrect addition to the original:

„Elucent aliae et fulgore coruscant,

Ardentes auro et paribus lita corpora guttis“.

Those „glittering and ardent“ bees „with royal streaks“ are bigger and longer than the „bastard crew“.

153. „Huge heavy honeycombs of golden juice,“ is an exaggeration of the translator; his author does not extend his hope so far, he only speaks of „dulcia mella“.

159. „Restrain the wanton fugitives, and take
A timely care to bring the truants back“.

Virgil teaches us only, how to restrain the fugitives, but not, how to bring them back:

„Instabiles animos ludo prohibebis inani“.

165. „Sweet gardens, full of saffron flowers, invite
The wandering gluttons and retard their flight“ —
„Besides the god obscene, who frights away,
With his lath sword, the thieves and birds of prey“.

The Latin poet gives some precepts, how idly straying bees may be forced to work; his first precept was: „tu regibus alas eripe,“ then employing the subjunctive instead of the imperative he continues:

„Invitent croceis halantes floribus horti,
Et custos furum atque avium cum falce saligna
Hellespontiaci servet tutela Priapi“.

These subjunctives „invitent“ and „servet“ are entirely neglected in the translation.

172. „Till his hard horny fingers ache with pain“ —

There may be many an excellent bee-keeper who does not like to work for his bees till his fingers „ache with pain,“ and, to be sure, it was not our author's intention to engage him in such a manner when he says:
„Ipse labore manum duro terat“.

191. „Yet, labouring well his little spot of ground,
Some scattering potherbs here and there he found;
Which cultivated with his daily care,
And bruised with vervain, were his frugal fare.
Sometimes white lilies did their leaves afford,
With wholesome poppy-flowers, to mend his homely
board;
For, late returning home, he supped at ease,
And wisely deemed the wealth of monarchs less;
The little of his own, because his own, did please“.

To be sure, „some potherbs,“ „bruised with vervain“ were a „frugal fare“ for that old Corycian swain, but it must be admitted, he had a somewhat particular taste, especially when he „mended“ his „frugal fare“ with „leaves of white lilies“ and wholesome „poppy-flowers“. But who is the inventor of this fantastical supper, nobody would be able to subsist upon? The latin author? by no means. In his description we see a skilful gardener who cultivates a sterile ground and plants — „premens“ — „rarum olus, alba lilia, verbenas vescumque papaver,“ and thinks himself as rich as a king; all day long occupied in his garden, he returns home late in the evening and finds an abundant supper, prepared of what his own garden has produced.

„Hic rarum tamen olus albaque circum

Lilia verbenasque premens vescumque papaver

Regum aequabat opes animo, seraque revertens

Nocte domum dapibus mensas onerabat inemptis“.

Dryden with all his nine decasyllabics has not succeeded in copying this pretty little picture; missing the exact meaning of the original he adds what is not only needless, but what might better have been omitted.

220. „Describe we next the nature of the bees,

Bestowed by Jove for secret services,

When, by the tinkling sound of timbrels led,

The king of heaven in Cretan caves they fed“.

We entirely miss in those lines that poetical strain, so often admired in our translator's sounding rhymes; in his lines there is scarcely to be seen a sparklet of that sacred flame by which inspired the Latin poet raises his flight in the beginning of a new chapter of his song:

„Nunc age, naturas apibus quas Jupiter ipse

Addidit, expediam, pro qua mercede, canoros

Curetum sonitus crepitantiaque aera secutae

Dictae coeli Regem pavere sub antro“.

Where is in the translation that „nunc age“ — „expediam“ — then that rhyme: „bees“ „services“, — and that somewhat weak „tinkling sound of timbrels“ for Virgil's powerful

„Curetum sonitus crepitantiaque aera“.

225. „Common cities of their own“

is not exact, and might excite in the reader's mind quite another idea than that expressed by Virgil's:

„consortia tecta urbis“.

226. „Beneath one law they live,
And with one common stock their traffic drive,
Each has a certain home, a several stall;
All is the state's; the state provides for all“.

It is difficult to say what is the meaning of that „traffic with one common stock,“ the original does not mention at all; the verses are obscure and do not render the plain meaning of the original:

„Magnis agitant sub legibus aevum,
Et patriam solae et certos novere penates“.

There is no „traffic,“ no „common stock,“ no „several stall,“ no „state,“ and, no doubt, it is better to the purpose.

232. „Some o'er the public magazines preside;
And some are sent new forage to provide“.

is an imperfect and erroneous version of Virgil's:

„Namque aliae victu invigilant et foedere pacto
„Exercentur agris“.

„Invigilare victu“ is not to „preside over magazines,“ but to care for provision and to stray through the fields for honey.

238. „Some nurse the future nation of the hive“.

„Future nation of the hive“? Much better Virgil:

„Aliae spem gentis adultos

„Educunt fetus“.

239. „Sweet honey some condense, some purge the grout;

The rest, in cells apart, the liquid nectar shut;

All, with united force, combine to drive

The lazy drones from the laborious hive“.

In the original there are no bees „purging the grout“; a somewhat unpoetical occupation for those that „labour sweet honey“.

„Aliaeque purissima mella

Stipant et liquido distendunt nectare cellas.

Sunt quibus ad portas cecidit custodia sorti,

Inque vicem speculantur aquas et nubila coeli,

Aut onera accipiunt venientum, aut agmine facto

Ignavum fucos pecus a praesepibus arcent“.

Is that „liquid nectar“ different from „sweet honey,“ or are there some bees in the hive that „condense the honey,“ others which „shut the nectar“? Our translator seems to believe so, otherwise it is not to be seen, why he is speaking of „some condensing,“ „some purging,“ „some shutting“ and of „cells apart“; but that is not the meaning of the Latin poet. The following four beautiful lines of the original are very imperfectly rendered in the version, and our translator must be supposed to have overlooked them, for he does not mention at all those, „quibus ad portas cecidit custodia“; those who „speculantur aquas et nubila coeli“ those who „onera accipiunt venientum,“ and he is wrong to say: „all combine etc.“ for Virgil's: „sunt qui etc.“ which is more exact.

The preceding comparison of the first 250 lines of the fourth Georgic will be sufficient to form a judgment

of the whole version of the Georgics. It may scarcely be called superior to that of the Pastorals: if we do not meet so many faults of coarseness and meanness; we are not less tired with those numerous bursts of extravagance, and those passages, where our translator did not understand his author, or, at least, translates in a manner, that he must be supposed not to have understood his original. The principal cause of these faults was undoubtedly Dryden's deficient knowledge of bee-keeping. In his essay on the Georgics Dryden says: „The poet must lay out all his strength, that his words may be warm and glowing that every thing he describes may immediatly present itself and rise up to the reader's view“. Unfortunately Dryden observed this precept in several passages too well; his words are often so „warm and glowing“ that they present quite another thing than what he was going to describe.

The tenth Aeneid.

1. „The gates of heaven unfold: Jove summons all
The gods to council, in the common hall,
Sublimely seated, he surveys from far
The fields, the camp, the fortune of the war,
And all the inferior world. From first to last
The sovereign senate in degrees are placed“.

These six lines are intended to render the following four or five hexameters.

„Panditur interea domus Omnipotentis Olympi,
Conciliumque vocat divum pater atque hominum rex
Sideream in sedem, terras unde arduus omnes
Castraque Dardanidum adspectat populosque Latinos.
Considunt tectis bipotentibus“.

It will not be difficult to show that our translator's ardour, we had often occasion to point out and to admire in his Pastorals and in several passages of the Georgics has exceedingly abated; there he generally endeavours to perfect and to embellish his author's ideas and images, and in his poetical zeal he often adds what might better have been neglected; here, on the contrary, he is barren and neglects what cannot be done so without wronging his author. What a distance, for instance, is there between „the gates of heaven“ of Dryden and his author's „domus omnipotentis Olympi“; between Virgil's „divum pater atque hominum rex“ and his translator's „Jove“; between that somewhat common „common hall“ of the latter and the „siderea sedes“ of the former. For what reason that useless „from far“ to „sublimely seated“. — „The fields, the camp, the fortune of the war and all the inferior world“ is not only an imperfect translation of „*terras omnes, castraque Dardanidum populosque Latinos*“ but the whole idea, the combination of „fields, camp, fortune of the war, all the inferior world“ is confuse and obscure and does not express the plain meaning of the original. „From first to last“ and „the sovereign senate,“ „placed in degrees“ are expressions more appropriate to excite the idea of a sitting of some board of trade or agriculture in a country-town, than that of a council of gods in „*tectis bipatentibus*“ which are not mentioned at all.

7. „Ye gods,

Natives or denizens, of blest abodes“ —

A somewhat long accosting. To what purpose that distinction „natives or denizens“?

Our translator is always thinking of those „degrees“ the original does not speak of; but there were only „natives“ and no „denizens“

„*Coelicolae magni*“.

11. „When my commands
Pronounced a peace and gave the Latin lands“ —

It will be difficult to discover in these lines Virgil's:
„Abnueram bello Italianam concurrere Teucris“.

„To pronounce and to give a peace,“ does not render:
„abnuere concurrere bello,“ nor is it indifferent to employ
the Imperfect, „pronounced“ instead of the Pluperfect „ab-
nueram“.

13. „What fear or hope on either part divides
Our heavens, and arms our powers on different sides?“
„Quae contra vetitum discordia? Quis metus aut hos
Aut hos arma sequi ferrumque lacescere suasit“.

Virgil does not speak of „divided heavens“; his
„discordia contra vetitum“ means the quarrel between the
Trojans and the Rutilians, afterwards called „aut hi“ —
„aut hi“.

17. „When Carthage shall contend the world with Rome;
Shall force the rigid rocks, and Alpine chains,
And, like a flood, come pouring on the plains,
Then is your time for faction and debate,
For partial favour and permitted hate“.

„Cum. fera Carthago Romanis arcibus olim
Exitium magnum atque Alpes inmittet apertas;
Tum certare odiis, tum res rapuisse licebit“.

Our translator shows us „rigid rocks,“ a „flood pouring
on the plains“ which are not in the original, but he forgets
to render that by no means useless „fera,“ the „Romani
arces,“ that „exitium magnum,“ that beautiful „res rapuisse“.

23. „Sit quiet, and compose your souls to peace“.

Who does not believe to hear an angry schoolmaster
scolding his naughty pupils.

How much better Virgil:

„Nunc sinite, et placitum lacti componite foedus“.

32. „E'en in their lines and trenches they contend
And scarce their walls the Trojan troops defend;
The town is filled with slaughter, and o'erfloats,
With a red deluge, their increasing moats“.

„Towns filled with slaughter“ and „moats overflowed with a red deluge“ are dreadful things, by no means taken from the original; the sober-minded Latin poet would not have been able to produce such fantastical exaggerations. All he says is:

„Non clausa tegunt jam moenia Teucros,
Quin intra portas atque ipsis proelia miscent
Aggeribus moerorum et inundant sanguine fossas“.

39. „Shall Troy renewed be forced and fired again!
A second siege my banished issue fears;
And a new Diomede in arms appears;
One more audacious mortal will be found“.

„muris iterum imminet hostis
Nascentis Trojae, nec non exercitus alter;
Atque iterum in Teucros Aetolis surget ab Arpis
Tydides“.

A „Troy renewed“ is more than a „nascens Troja“ — The following verse: „A second siege etc.“ is to no purpose and rather tedious — „A new Diomede“? No, but Diomede anew; by adding „one more audacious mortal etc.“ our translator makes us suppose that he thought not of that Diomede who had wounded Venus, but of some other, audacious mortal, who like Diomede would attack the immortal goddess.

52. „What should I tell of tempests on the main,
Of Aeolus usurping Neptune's reign?
Of Iris sent, with Bacchanalian heat
T'inspire the matrons and destroy the fleet“.

A superficial examination will prove how negligently Dryden, in these lines, has rendered his original; there we read:

„Quid repetam exustas Erycino in litore classes?
Quid tempestatum regem, ventos furentes
Aeolia excitos? aut actam nubibus Irim?“

„What should I tell“ is not „quid repetam“ — „tempests on the main“ is mere prose. In his lines we do not see the „exustae classes“ nor „actam nubibus Irim“. „To inspire and to destroy“ — Who is to do so? Every reader of the translation will answer: Iris. But in Virgil's mind it is another less radiant deity, it is Allecto; he says:

„Nunc etiam Manes — heac intempta manebat
Sors rerum — movet et superis immissa repente
Allecto, medias Italum bacchata per urbes“.

Dryden translates:

„Now Juno to the Stygian sky descends,
Solicits hell for aid, and arms the fiends.
That new example wanted yet above —
An act that well became the wife of Jove“.

The „Stygian sky“ is a country discovered by Dryden; other people mount, he „descends“ to his sky — „and arms the fiends“ is to no purpose. — „That new example wanted yet above“ does not render Virgil's „heac intempta manebat sors rerum,“ which has quite another meaning. „Juno“ and „the wife of Jove“; Virgil's Venus does not pronounce her enemy's name, „quisquam“ she says, which is better to the purpose.

67. „Since you can spare from all your wide command
 No spot of earth, no hospitable land,
 Which may my wandering fugitives receive,
 (Since haughty Juno will not give you leave)
 Then, father (if I still may use that name)
 By ruined Troy, yet smoking from the flame,
 I beg you, let Ascanius, by my care,
 Be freed from danger, and dismissed the war“.

These eight decasyllabics do not exactly render the following verses of the original:

„Si nulla est regio, Teucris quam det tua conjux
 Dura, per eversae, genitor, fumantia Trojae
 Excidia obtestor, liceat dimittere ab armis
 Incolumem Ascanium, liceat superesse nepotem“.

Dryden exaggerates the influence of his „haughty Juno“ who is better called „tua conjux dura“; her tender husband generally did not so much listen to her words; „Ruined Troy“ does not express that stress of Virgil's „per eversae fumantia Trojae excidia“; nor „freed from danger“ „incolumem,“ — „liceat dimittere“ and that most effectual second „liceat superesse nepotem“ in Venus' request is entirely omitted in the translation.

80. „Obscurely let him rest, his right resign
 To promised empire, and his Italian line“.

„Obscurely let him rest“ is a somewhat tedious repetition of what Venus said before: „inglorious let him live“. „His right to promised empire“ and „his Italian line“ are things invented by Dryden, the meaning of which is somewhat obscure, Virgil says:

„positis inglorius armis,
 Exigat hic aevum“.

83. „Then Carthage may the Ausonian towns destroy,
Nor fear the race of a rejected boy“.

is a somewhat licentious translation of Virgil's:

„Magna dicione jubeto
Carthago premat Ansoniam, nihil urbibus inde
Obstabit Tyriis“.

It is true, the „urbes Tyriae“ are what is called in the preceding line „Carthago“ and therefore the translator might drop it, but is it not more than poetical license to render „inde“ — ab Ansonia, ab Aenea ejusque posteris — by „the race of a rejected boy“? „to destroy the Ansonian towns“ is not so powerful as „magna premere dicione jubeto“.

90. „Much better had he curbed his high desires,
And hovered o'er his ill-extinguished fires.
To Simois' banks the fugitives restore,
And give them back to war and all the woes
before“.

„His ill-extinguished fires,“ what fires? It might be difficult to answer, if our original were not plainer. There we read:

„Non satius, cineres patriae insedissem supremos
Atque solum quo Troja fuit? Xantum et Simoenta
Redde, oro, miseris, iterumque revolvere casus
Da, pater, Iliacos Teucris“.

Here all is clear; we see the „supremi patriae cineres“ that „solum quo Troja fuit“ which the translator ought not to have dropped. „And give them back to war and all the woes before“ is not so effectual by far as Virgil's: „Redde, oro, miseris“ „Da, pater etc.“ and „revolvere casus Iliacos“.

110. „Did I or Iris give this mad advice?
Or made the fool himself the fatal choice?“

The original is imperfectly rendered :

„Quis deus in fraudem, quae dura potentia nostri
Egit? Ubi hic Juno, demissave nubibus Iris?“

„Agere in fraudem“ is more than „to give mad advice“. „Quis deus,“ „quae dura potentia nostri,“ „demissave nubibus Iris“ ought not to have been passed over in silence.

„Or made the fool himself etc.“ is a somewhat mean addition of Dryden, the original does not style him so.

112. „You think it hard, the Latins should destroy
With swords your Trojans and with fires your
Troy“.

Hard and unjust indeed, for men to draw
Their native air, nor take a foreign law“.

„To destroy Trojans with swords and Troy with fires“ is somewhat affected. The original has but a „Troy destroyed with fires“ which is quite sufficient:

„Indignum est Italos Trojam circumdare flammis
Nascentem, et patria Turnum consistere terra“.

„Nascentem“ is not translated — „for men“ is not exact enough — „nor take a foreign law“ a needless addition.

118. „But yet, 'tis just and lawful for your line
To drive their fields, and force, with fraud to
join“.

„Quid, face Trojanos atra vim ferre Latinis“.

Is not that single „quid“ better to the purpose than „but yet it is just and lawful“ altogether. That „to drive etc.“ is somewhat obscure and far from rendering, „vim ferre face atra“.

137. „Did I with fire the Trojan town deface,
Or hinder from return your exiled race?
Was I the cause of mischief, or the man
Whose lawless lust the fatal war began?“

It cannot be denied, the preceding four lines are a negligent and deficient version of Virgil's following verses:

„Nosne tibi fluxas Phrygiae res vertere fundo
Conamur? nos? an miseros qui Troas Achivis
Objecit? Quae causa fuit consurgere in arma
Europam Asiamque et foedera solvere furto“?

Where are here the „fluxa Phrygiae res,“ that „vertere fundo,“ that second „nos“? „Europa Asiaque in armis“. And, neglecting all those most essential moments of the original, that endeavours to show us the angry queen of heaven in her full resentment, our translator — it is difficult to say for what reason — adds an idea of his own, asking: „Did I from return hinder your exiled race?“ from what return? undoubtedly he means the return of Aeneas from Italy to Asia; Juno, however, is speaking of the beginning of the war, and, therefore, that verse is not in its place.

149. „So winds, when yet unfledged in the woods they lie,
In whispers first their tender voices try,
Then issue on the main with bellowing rage,
And storms to trembling mariners presage“.

„Winds issuing on the main with bellowing rage“ do no longer „presage storms“ they are storms themselves; nor is this contradiction in the original:

„Ceu flamina prima
Cum deprensa fremunt silvis, et caeca volutant
Murmura, venturos nautis prodentia ventos“.

Here are no „winds issuing on the main with bellowing rage,“ but, „flamina volutantia caeca murmura et prodentia ventos“.

153. „the imperial god,
Who shakes heaven's axles with his awful nod“.

„Pater omnipotens, rerum cui prima potestas“ —

Dryden's „imperial god“ is not what Virgil's „pater omnipotens“; the latter is much more angust — „heaven's axles“; Dryden does not tell us how many „axles“ there are in his heaven.

159. „Celestials! your attentive ears incline!

Since (said the god) the Trojans must not join
In wished alliance with the Latian line —

Since endless jarrings, and immortal hate
Tend but to discompose our happy state —

The war hence forward be resigned to fate;

Each to his proper fortune stand or fall;

Equal and unconcerned I look on all.

Rutulians, Trojans, are the same to me;

And both shall draw the lots their fates decree,

Let these assault, if fortune be their friend;

And if she favours those, let those defend;

The fates will find their way“.

„Accipite ergo animis atque heac mea figite dicta.

Quandoquidem Ausonios conjungi foedere Teucris

Haud licitum, nec vestra capit discordia finem;

Quae cuique est fortuna hodie, quam quisque
secat spem,

Tros Rutulusve fuat, nullo discrimine habebo,

Seu fatis Italum castra obsidione tenentur,

Sive errore malo Trojae, monitisque sinistris,

Nec Rutulos solvo. Sua cuique exorsa laborem

Fortunamque ferent. Rex Jupiter omnibus idem

Fata viam invenient“.

The preceding translation of this somewhat obscure, and therefore differently explained, but altogether imperial speech of the „pater omnipotens“ may scarcely be

called a happy one. Not only that solemn graveness, and conciseness, and even that obscurity we admire in the original is entirely lost, but the very ideas are negligently and imperfectly expressed, so that we are sometimes tempted to believe that our translator did not understand his author. Where, for instance, is that graveness of the introduction „Accipite ergo animis atque hec mea figite dicta,“ rendered by Dryden by that somewhat weak: „your attentive ears incline“. That tedious „said the god,“ that somewhat modern „Latian line,“ that needless „to discompose our happy state“ are not in the original nor to the purpose. Two verses, the most essential of the whole speech.

„Seu fatis Italum castra obsidione tenentur
Sive errore malo Trojae monitisque sinistris“ —

are not translated at all, nor „nec Rutulos solvo“. „And both etc.“ does by no means render Virgil's pregnant „Sua cuique etc.,“ „labor“ and „fortuna“ are not expressed by „Let these etc.“. „Rex Jupiter omnibus idem“ ought not to have been dropped in the conclusion.

176. „The senate rise,
And to his palace wait their sovereign through
the skies“.

In the original it is not the „senate,“ but Jupiter himself who rises „from his golden seat“.

„Solio tum Jupiter aureo
Surgit, coelicolae quem ad limina ducunt“.

Not „through the skies to his palace“ but to the threshold of the palace they were assembled in.

184. Thin on the towers they stand, and e'en those few,
A feeble, fainting and dejected crew“.

„Thin“ they were, but „those few“ were by no means „feeble and fainting“; the following lines prove the contrary:

„Miseri stant turribus altis
Nequicquam, et rara muros cinxere corona;
Fert ingens toto connixus corpore saxum
Haud partem exiguum montis Lyrnesius Acmon“.

He who is able to lift up an „ingens saxum haud partem exiguum montis“ may scarcely be called „feeble and fainting“.

The preceding examination of the first two hundred lines will be sufficient to state that our translator's „sacred flame“ has extremely lessened in the version of the tenth Aeneid. He seems to be fatigued and desirous to reach the end of his long, difficult, and laborious undertaking. In these lines we seldom observe that ardour, that indefatigable endeavour to conserve in his translation all the beauties of his author; he seems to be satisfied with rendering the plain meaning of his original without much care of dropping what does not suit his purpose, or adding whatever he thinks fit. Thus this translation could not but prove inferior to that of the Pastorals and Georgics.

He who sits down to Dryden's translation of Virgil, with the original spread before him, will be at no loss to point out many passages that are faulty, many indifferently understood, many imperfectly translated, some in which dignity is lost, others in which bombast is substituted in its stead.

Though he was not deficient in Greek and Roman learning, he did not pause to weigh and sift those difficult and obscure passages, at which the most learned will doubt and hesitate for the correct meaning. He

seldom waited to analyze the sentence he was about to render, far less scrupulously to weigh the precise purport and value of every word it contained. If he caught the general spirit and meaning of his author and could express it with equal force in English verse, he cared not if minute elegances were lost, or the beauties of accurate proportion destroyed, or a dubious interpretation hastily adopted on the credit of a scholium. He used abundantly the license he had claimed for a translator, to be deficient rather in the languages out of which he renders than that into which he translates.

With all his learning, and all his taste, Dryden was never able to discard that coarseness both of ideas and expression, for which the studied, composed and dignified style of his author gave neither opening nor apology. There are various passages in his translation, where the transgression is on his own part altogether gratuitous. Such, for instance, is the version of the fourth Pastoral v. 75.

„The nauseous qualms of ten long months and
travail to requite“.

„Matri longa decem tulerunt fastidia menses“.

Such the version of the tenth Aeneid v. 110.

„Did I or Iris give this mad advice?

Or made the fool himself the fatal choice?“

„Quis deus in fraudem, quae dura potentia nostri
Egit? Ubi hic Juno demissave nubibus Iris?“

Such the version of the ninth Past. v. 6:

„When the grim captain in a surly tone

Cries out „Pack up, ye rascals, and be gone!“

Kicked out, we set the best face on’t we could“.

„Ut possessor agelli

Diceret: heac mea sunt; veteres migrate coloni

Nunc victi“ —

Instead of rendering precisely an expression which might require explanation or paraphrase our translator is contented to present to the reader some modern image which he may at once fully comprehend. Thus, the tenth *Aeneid* v. 6:

„Considunt tectis bipatentibus“ is rendered:

„The sovereign senate in degrees are placed“.

He often descends to display his knowledge with pedantic ostentation; by an unfortunate adaption of modern technical phraseology. The simple direction of Helenus, in the third *Aeneid* v. 526.

„Laeva tibi tellus et longo laeva petantur

Aequora circuitu; dextrum fuge litus et undas“

is translated:

„Tack to the larboard, and stand off to sea;

Veer starboard sea and land“ —

a counsel which would have been unintelligible not only to Palinurus, but to the best pilot of the English navy.

Such expressions proper to modern manners often produce an unfortunate confusion between the age in which the scene is laid and the date of the translation.

Our translator's faults of negligence are beyond recital. Such is the unevenness of his compositions, that ten lines are seldom found together without something which the reader cannot approve of. He entirely neglected that „labor limae“ so much recommended by his author's friend; while his author had spent three years in revising his *Pastorals* and seven years in the composition of his *Georgics*, and revised both after having completed the writing of the *Aeneid*, Dryden dismissed from his thoughts what he had once written. There is no example to be found of any correction or improvement made by him after publication. His performances were always hasty, either excited by some external occasion, or extorted by

domestical necessity; he composed without consideration and published without correction.

Thus Dryden gave a large margin to criticism; and when the first admiration had subsided, there wanted not some to exercise its invidious task. Among those the highest name is that of Swift, the most distinguished for venomous and persevering malignity, that of Milbourne.

„And here, says the latter, in the first place, I must needs own Jacob Tonson's — the editor's — ingenuity to be greater than the translator's, who in the inscription of his fine gay, in the front of the book, calls it very honestly Dryden's Virgil, to let the reader know, that this is not that Virgil, so much admired in the Augustean age, an author which Mr. Dryden once thought intranslatable, but a Virgil of another stamp, of a coarser allay, a silly, impertinent, nonsensical writer of a various and uncertain style, a mere Alexander Ross, or somebody inferior to him, who could never have been known again in the translation, if the name of Virgil had not been bestowed upon him in large characters in the frontispiece and in the running title. Indeed, there is scarce the „*magni nominis umbra*“ to be met with in this translation, which being fairly intimated by Jacob, he needs add no more, but „*si populus vult decipi, decipiatur*“. Milbourne extended his criticism only to the preface, Pastorals and Georgics, and as he professes to give his antagonist an opportunity of reprisal, he added his own versions of the first and fourth Pastorals and the first Georgic, which induced Pope to style him „the fairest of critics,“ because he exhibited his own translation to be compared with that which he condemned. But the world has forgotten his work; his outrages seem to be ebullitions of a mind agitated by a stronger resentment than bad poetry can excite and previously resolved not to be pleased.

There were others who, having found faults in Dryden's translation, thought they could avoid them. Brady attempted in blank verse a translation of the *Aeneid*, which when dragged into the world, did not live long enough to cry. Another blank version was undertaken by Trapp with no better success; he had, however, perseverance enough to add the *Parorals* and *Georgics*; both have been forgotten.

Dryden himself calls his version rudiments of Virgil's poetry; coarsely translated, he says, but which yet retain some beauties of the author; which neither the barbarity of our language nor my unskilfulness could so much sully, but that would appear sometimes in the dim mirror which I hold before you.

Indeed, notwithstanding all its faults Dryden's translation of Virgil has its high merits; more renowned men than Swift and Milbourne and all his other detractors recommended it highly. „He produced, says Pope, the most noble and spirited translation that I know in any language“. Certainly it excelled whatever had appeared in English and appears to have satisfied his friends and for the most part silenced his enemies. The unabated vigour and spirit overbalances all its deficiencies. A sedulous scholar might often approach more nearly to the dead letter of Virgil and give an exact, distinct, sober-minded idea of the meaning of particular passages, but in the art of communicating the ancient poets ideas with force and energy, equal to his own, Dryden has completely surpassed all who have gone before and all who have succeeded him. Where the fervency of genius is required he has usually equalled his original; where peculiar elegance and exact propriety are demanded, his version may be sometimes found flat and inaccurate, but the mastering spirit prevails, and it is never disgusting or

indelicate. Of all the classical translations none is so acceptable of the class of readers to whom the learned languages are a clasped book and a sealed fountain.

The merit of great works is to be estimated by their general effect and ultimate result. It is easy to note a weak line and write one more vigorous in its place, to find a happiness of expression in the original and transplant it by force into the version, but what is given to the parts may be subducted from the whole, and the reader may be weary, though the critic may command.

In estimating this translation consideration must be had of the nature of the language, the form of the metre and above all, of the change which two thousand years had made in the modes of life and the habits of thoughts.

It is not difficult, to find a rugged verse or a bad rhyme in Dryden's version; we often miss that regularity which is the essence of verse; he is too liberal in the use of triplets and Alexandrines, which are interruptions of that constancy to which science aspires, but, it must be admitted, Dryden knew how to choose the flowing and the sonorous words, to vary the pauses and adjust the accents, to diversify the cadence and yet preserve the smoothness of his metre. Pope is, no doubt, right when he says:

„Waller was smooth, but Dryden taught to join
The varying verse, the full resounding line,
The long majestic march, and energy divine“.



